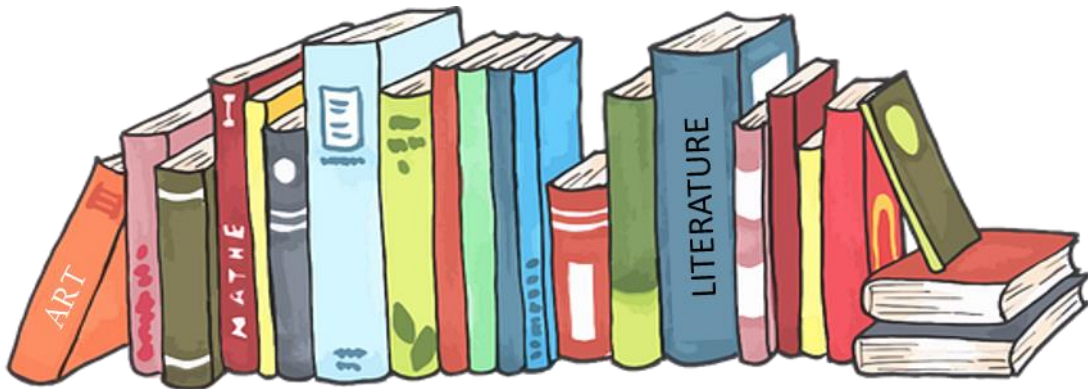


Is Literature “too cool” for the English classroom?

Essay by Wagner Nogueira (TEAM Member). June 3, 2021.



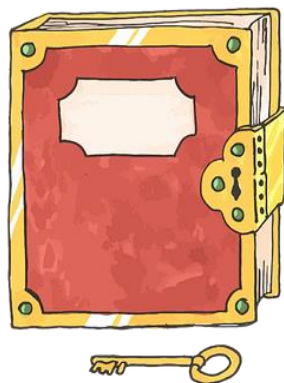
I used to believe that the use of Literature in language classrooms was not possible because the language of literary texts can often be very formal; however, I have changed my mind in this respect. Literature can be very helpful for students to improve their communicative competence. Therefore, the use of literary texts in the English learning classroom can be very interesting for the teacher to work with.

I have always seen literary texts as a challenge for English students; therefore, I used to think these texts were not appropriate for teachers to use in the classroom. Nonetheless, through some readings I noticed that literary texts can be extremely beneficial for both teacher and student because such texts bring real examples of communicative situations. According to Koutsompou (2015), Literature reading is, no doubt, a communicative activity and literary texts bring authentic examples of language use.



The main goal to study a language is communication and the use of literary texts can help one to achieve such goal. Moreover, the use of these texts can improve students' learning through the use of certain activities to help with the four language skills. In fact, language teaching and learning is supposed to emphasize “authentic materials of different styles, registers and genres, students’

emotional experiences and personal responses, promotion of students' oral and writing skills, and development of students' attitudes" (CARLESS; HARFITT¹, 2013 apud TSANG; PARAN; LAU, 2020, p.4).



Among all these benefits of literary texts, the impact in the student's life is the most important one. When students read a text with real examples of life and have the opportunity to discuss the content of such text with others, they start to build up critical thinking over life. In addition, they get more motivated to know about other stories. In fact, Erkaya (2005) includes motivation among the four benefits of using short stories to teach ESL/EFL – the other three are literary, cultural, and higher-order thinking.

I assumed that the use of Literature in the language classroom could not be an appropriate choice for teachers because literary texts had difficult language for students to deal with. Nevertheless, after some discussions and readings I concluded that these texts can be a good option for teachers to work with the four language skills. Moreover, the use of literary texts can also help to improve students' communicative competence and they will probably carry the message of such texts along their whole life.

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¹ CARLESS, D.; HARFITT, G. Innovation in secondary education: a case of curriculum reform in Hong Kong. In: HYLAND, K.; WONG, L. C. (ed.). **Innovation and change in English language education**. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013. p. 172-185.

PICTURES: adapted from www.pixabay.com

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